

Office of Interdisciplinary Studies
<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/ois/>

2009 - 2010 Middle Eastern and African Studies Program

MEAS 200: Fall Term 2009

Introduction to the Middle East and Africa:

Instructor: Iman Mersal
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Time: Tues & Thurs, 2:00 to 3:20 PM
Place: CEB 251

Office Hours: Mondays 11 AM -1:00 PM or by appointment
E-mail: imersal@ualberta.ca
Course website: <http://tinyurl.com/5gasgj>

Course Prerequisite: none

Course-based Ethics Approval: not required

Community Service Learning component: none

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available: representative exam material to be distributed in class.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course explores conceptual frameworks and interdisciplinary tools for understanding the Middle East and Africa as geographical, historical, cultural, discursive, and intellectual spaces.

The course will cover six units, each of them containing one or more themes.

1. Islam in the Middle East and Africa
2. European explorers, merchants, and the slave trade
3. The discovery of modern European civilization in the Middle East and Africa.
4. Colonialism: discourse, economy, maps and resistance.
5. Independence movements in the Middle East and Africa; reform and nationalism.
6. Contemporary challenges in the Middle East and Africa: dictatorship, corruption, civil war, ethnic conflict, neo-colonialism, Islamic fundamentalism, migration and displacement.

Students are expected to complete the required readings in advance, and must attend class, and participate in classroom discussions in order to receive the maximum participation grade. All readings are drawn from required texts, available in the SUB bookstore, or on line, as explained below.

Texts:

Books available in the SUB bookstore:

- 1 - *History of Africa*. Kevin Shillington; Palgrave Macmillan; Revised 2nd edition
- 2- *A History of the Modern Middle East*. William L. Cleveland; Westview Press; Third Edition.

Readings online:

- 1- *Anthology of Islamic Literature: From the Rise of Islam to Modern Times* with an introduction and commentaries by James Kritzeck. Readings:
 - Islam and Proper Names, Islamic Dates, the Koran: Scripture and Literature, pp. 19-33.
 - Ibn Al-Muqaffa: The Monkey and the Tortoise, pp.73- 78.
 - Samarqandi: Stories about Persian Poets, pp.188- 199.
 - Ibn Battutah: The Maldive Islands, pp. 262-266.

- Ibn Khaldun: Group Solidarity, pp.274- 280.
- 2- *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes*. Translated and introduced by Michael A. Sells
Reading: Antara: the Mu'allaqa: pp. 45-56.
- 4- *Poems of Black Africa*. Edited by Wole Soyinka, pp.103 - 108.
- 5- *Under the Naked Sky: Short Stories from the Arab World* (Modern Arabic Writing), translated by Denys Johnson-Davies. Readings:
- Yusuf Idris (Egypt): The Chair Carrier, pp.1-5
- 6 - *The Heinemann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories* (AWS African Writers Series), edited by C. L. Innes and Chinua Achebe. Readings:
- Daniel Mandishona (Southern Africa: Zimbabwe): The Wasted Land, pp. 57- 66.
- Assia Djebar (Northern Africa: Algeria): The Foreigner, Sister of the Foreigner Woman, pp. 121- 128.
- M.G. Vassanji (East Africa: Tanzania): Leaving, pp. 129- 133.
- Okey Chigabo (West Africa: Nigeria): The Housegirl, pp.149- 146.
- 7- Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-28.

Course Schedule:

	Tuesday	Thursday	Topic
Week 1		3-Sep	Introduction
Week 2	8-Sep		The rise and expansion of Islam: Required reading: William L. Cleveland, pp.1- 18.
		10-Sep	The rise and expansion of Islam, continued. Required Reading: 1- Islamic Proper Names, Islamic Dates, the Quran: scripture and Literature, pp.19 -33 in James Kritzeck, <i>Anthology of Islamic Literature</i> . 2- Ibn Al-Muqaffa: The Monkey And The Tortoise, pp.73- 78. Optional reading: <i>Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes</i> . Translated and introduced by Michael A. Sells Antara: the Mu'allaqa: pp.45-56.
Week 3	15-Sep		Islamic civilization to the fifteenth century in the Middle East and Africa Required Reading: 1 – Cleveland, The development of Islamic Civilization to the fifteenth century, pp.19- 35. 2 –Ibn Khaldun: Group Solidarity, pp. 274- 280. Optional reading: Samarqandi: Stories about Persian Poets, pp.188- 199.
		17-Sep	Islam in Africa to the fifteenth century Required Reading: 1- The Arab invasions: The Nile Valley, Shillington, pp. 71-76. 2- Islam and the Sudanic states of West Africa, Shillington, pp. 88- 99. 3- Shillington, pp. 110- 114. Optional reading: Ibn Battutah: The Maldives Islands, pp. 262-266. Viewing: Basil Davidson documentary (in class)

Week 4	22-Sep		The Ottoman and Safavid Empires: A New Imperial Synthesis. Required Reading: William L. Cleveland, pp.37- 56.
		24-Sep	North and Northeast Africa to the eighteenth century. Required Reading: Shillington, pp.156- 168.
Week 5	29-Sep		European explorers, merchants, and the slave trade: Atlantic slave trade: Required Reading: 1- The Atlantic slave trade, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, pp. 169-178. 2- West - central Africa in the era of slave trade, Shillington, pp.196- 199. 3- The ending of the Atlantic slave trade in nineteenth century, Shillington, pp.230- 237.
		1-Oct	European explorers, merchants, and the slave trade: East African slave trade: Guest lecture by Professor Guy Thompson. Required Reading: 1- The Portuguese in the east African Coast 1498- 1600: Shillington, pp.129-135. 2- The east African slave trade, Shillington, pp.249-255.
Week 6	6-Oct		The discovery of European civilization in the 18 th and 19 th centuries: the Middle East Required Reading: Cleveland, pp. 57- 80.
		8-Oct	The discovery of European civilization in the 18 th and 19 th centuries: Africa Required Reading: 1- Shillington, Missionaries, pp.238, 265, 288- 293, 259- 361. 2- Assia Djebar (Northern Africa: Algeria), The Foreigner, Sister of the foreigner woman, pp. 121- 128.
Week 7	13-Oct		Colonialism: (1) Colonial discourse: Orientalism. Required Reading: 1- Edward Said, Orientalism, pp. 1-28 Viewing: Edward Said on orientalism (in class)
		15-Oct	Colonialism: (2) Colonizing the Middle East and the origin of reform: Required Reading: Cleveland pp. 119- 132.
Week 8	20-Oct		Colonialism: (3) Resistance and nationalism. Africa: The European colonial conquest and African resistance Required Reading: 1- Shillington The French in North Africa and Algerian resistance, pp 273- 276. 2- Shillington, pp.301- 316. 3- Shillington, The British scramble for south- central Africa, pp. 321- 329.

Week 8		22-Oct	Colonialism: 4) Resistance and nationalism. Middle East. Required Reading: The Arab struggle for Independence, Cleveland pp. 193-215.
Week 9	27- Oct		Discussion
		29- Oct	Midterm
Week 10	3-Nov		The winning of independence Required Reading: 1- Shillington, Chapter 26, pp.376 - 393. 2- Yusuf Idris: The Chair Carrier, pp.1-5.
		6-Nov	The winning of independence, continued Required Reading: 1- Shillington, Chapter 27, pp.394 - 416. 2- Poems of Black Africa, pp.103 - 108.
Week 11	10 Nov		No Class
		12-Nov	Revolution in the Middle East: Guest lecture by Professor Magdy El-Shamma Required Reading: To be provided on course website.
Week 12	17-Nov		Post-independence challenges: dictatorship corruption, ethnic conflict, civil war Shillington, pp.417- 430.
		19-Nov	Post-independence challenges: dictatorship corruption, ethnic conflict, civil war Required Reading: 1- Poems of Black Africa, pp.103 - 108. 2- Short story from Zimbabwe: Daniel Mandishona The Wasted Land, pp. 57- 66.
Week 13	24-Nov		Post-independence challenges: Neo-colonialism in Palestine. Required Reading: Cleveland: pp. 239- 371. Optional reading: 1- Mahmoud Darwish (Palestine), poems (To be provided on course website). 2- Iraq in the era of Saddam Hussayn and the Ba'th, Cleveland: pp. 408- 412.
		26- Nov	Post-independence challenges: Islamic fundamentalism Required Reading: 1- Cleveland: pp. 440- 450. 2- Shillington, North Africa, pp.443- 445.
Week 14	1-Dec		Music as culture in the Middle East and Africa Guest lecture by Professor Michael Frishkopf Required Reading: To be provided on course website.
		3-Dec	Migration and displacement. Required Reading: 1- Short story: M.G. Vassanji (East Africa- Tanzania), Leaving, pp. 129- 133. 2- Short story: The housegirl, Okey Chigbo 1955, Africa-Enugu, Nigeria- Toronto, pp.149- 164

Grading:

Activity	%
Attendance and participation	20%
Midterm quiz (Oct 29)	35%
Final Exam (2:00 pm, Monday December 14)	45%
Total	100%

Course requirements:

- **Regular class attendance; active participation.**
- **Completing weekly reading assignments on time, in order to participate in class discussions effectively.**
- **Midterm quiz**
- **Final exam**

Required Notes:

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003). “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

☛ Plagiarism and Cheating:

All students should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of **plagiarism** and its consequences when detected.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**OIS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor Minimal Pass	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Failure	F or F4	0.0